MARK: A Study Guide - A Call to Discipleship

Outlined with Sectional Summaries

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Dr. Morris Murray, Jr.

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The Nature of the Gospels

The word *gospel* means "good news." As early as the 2nd century A.D., the word was applied to written documents. Irenaeus, one of the early Church Fathers from Antioch or Smyrna, appears to be the first person to attach the Greek word *kata* ("according to") to all four of our gospel narratives (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John).

The gospel narratives are not scientific biographies. In fact, they are selected collective stories by which their authors convey their specific message about Jesus as the Christ of God. The message in the gospel narratives centers in what God has done historically in Jesus of Nazareth, the now exalted Lord of history. In other words, He is more than a figure in history, and it is none other than He Himself Who is also eternally present. Indeed, the creative force behind Christianity is Jesus as the Eternal One.

The writers of the four gospel narratives use the Old Testament scriptures as their authoritative basis. This authority is such because it points to Jesus Himself.

There is almost universal consensus that Mark is the first of the four gospel narratives to be written. Mark, therefore, represents a turning point in Christian history. Traditions about Jesus were still being circulated orally. The apostles, as the earliest witnesses to Jesus, were slowly dying. The need to write down these selected collective stories about the significance of Jesus was, therefore, incontrovertible. What had happened in the Christ-event must be preserved in written testimonial form.

The Synoptic Gospels

The first three of the four gospel narratives are commonly called *the synoptic*[1] *gospels* because of the similarities in their presentations of information about Jesus. The following represents their similarities from a demographic perspective:

(1) Of Mark's 678 verses (1:1-16:20), there are 638 parallel verses in Matthew and 517 parallel verses in Luke; (2) Of Matthew's 1071 verses, there are 500 parallel verses in Mark, 250 parallel verses in Luke only, and 300 verses only in Matthew; (3) Of Luke's 1150 verses, there are 320 parallel verses in Mark, 250 parallel verses in Matthew only, and 580 verses only in Luke.

Thus, there is some material peculiar or unique to each gospel narrative, some material only in two gospels (Mt. and Lk.), and some material common to all three.

Authorship

Although not actually named, evidence seems to favor John Mark. Testimony in this regard dates to the 2nd century A.D. (Papias) and has been substantiated by many since then (Eusebius of Caesarea, the anti-Marconite Prologue, Justin the Martyr, Irenaeus, and the Muratorian Canon). Thus, according to church tradition, John Mark, who would have been in Rome with Peter at the time of the crisis under Nero (cp. 1 Peter 5:13), seems most likely the author.

[1] The English word *synoptic* comes from two Greek words meaning "to see together."

Date

The most probable time would be between 60-70 A.D. If the linkage with Peter is accurate, the time shrinks to 64-66 A.D.

Purpose

The Gospel according to Mark represents the earliest attempt to reduce the oral apostolic tradition about Jesus to a written form. It is not a biography of Jesus. It is a selective proclamation or witness-document which bears testimony to the utter significance of Jesus. Throughout the gospel account, Mark emphasizes that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God (1:1) and is worthy to be followed in discipleship.

There are two climaxes in this account: the first is in 8:29 with the confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi that Jesus is the Messiah; the second is in 15:39 with the confession of the centurion in charge of the crucifixion that Jesus is the Son of God. Thus, from both a Jew and a Gentile, the basic declaration of the Christian faith is set forth in Mark. Throughout this gospel account, Mark clarifies what His Messiahship involves.

Furthermore, almost half of this gospel describes the final period of Jesus' ministry. The purpose of this is to show that in His suffering, death, and resurrection, the revelation of God in Christ is most clearly seen. The messiahship of Jesus involves *suffering.* It was this task, destiny, and purpose for which Jesus was sent into the world. Thus, a call for discipleship also embraces *suffering* for His disciples.

The Gospel According to MARK[2]

I PREPARATION for Jesus (1:1-13)
- A. Forerunner of Jesus (1:1-8)
- B. Baptism of Jesus (1:9-11)
- C. Temptations of Jesus (1:12-13)

II PRESENTATION of Jesus (1:14-6:56)
- A. Message of Jesus (1:14-15)
- B. Calling from Jesus (1:16-20)
- C. Credentials of Jesus (1:21-6:56)

III PROFILES on Jesus (7:1-12:44)
- A. Conflicts with Jesus (7:1-8:26)
- B. Instructions from Jesus (8:27-10:52)
- C. Entry of Jesus (11:1-12:44)

IV PRONOUNCEMENTS by Jesus (13:1-37)
- A. Perilous Times Foretold by Jesus (13:1-27)
- B. Parable of Fig Tree by Jesus (13:28-31)
- C. Parousia of Jesus (13:32-37)

V PASSIONS of Jesus (14:1-15:47)
- A. Plot to Kill Jesus (14:1-2)
- B. Precious Ointment for Jesus (14:3-9)
- C. Price Agreement Concerning Betrayal of Jesus (14:10-11)
- D. Passover and Lord's Supper with Jesus (14:12-26)
- E. Praying of Jesus (14:32-42)
- F. Partners against Jesus (14:27-31, 43-72)
- G. Pilate and Jesus (15:1-5)
- H. Praetorium and Mocking of Jesus (15:16-21)
- I. Place of a Skull and Crucifixion of Jesus (15:22-41)
- J. Pallbearer and Burial of Jesus (15:42-47)

VI POWER of Jesus (16:1-20)
- A. Resurrection of Jesus (16:1-13)
- B. Commission from Jesus (16:14-18)
- C. Ascension of Jesus (16:19)
- D. Obedience to Jesus (16:20)

[2] This outline is taken from my own *Outlined Reading Guides to the New Testament,* 2000.

A Study Guide to MARK
Outlined with Sectional Summaries

I Preparation for Jesus (1:1-13)

A. Forerunner of Jesus (1:1-8)

The beginning of the gospel refers to what God does in Jesus of Nazareth. It is the proclamation of the Christ-event. It designates the good news of salvation. Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew *Joshua* which means "Jehovah is salvation" or "Jehovah provides salvation."
The importance of the quotation (cp. Ex. 23:20; Is. 40:3; Mal. 3:1) is to identify what God has done in Christ with the deliverance of His people from Egypt and Babylon. It is an historic parallel.
The aim of John is to call for repentance in light of the fact that the Messiah is coming. Mark thus involves the forerunner with the Messiah Himself. Mark emphasizes knowing Christ in a spiritual relationship (over against an "in the flesh" relationship).

B. Baptism of Jesus (1:9-11)

Here Jesus is identifying Himself with sinners and beginning His redemptive mission through suffering. His baptism is the public dedicating of Himself to be God's kind of Messiah.

C. Temptations of Jesus (1:12-13)

Mark is here summing up Christ's constant temptation to be the kind of Messiah both Satan and the Jews wanted Him to be. Like all those God has chosen for special revelation, Jesus had to fight the temptations with Satan. Christ enters into the conflict and succeeds.

II Presentation of Jesus (1:14:6:56)

A. Message of Jesus (1:14-15)

Jesus comes preaching the gospel of God, i.e., what God is doing. This is good news. *Ho kairos*[3] – "the time" is the time that is pregnant with opportunity when God has chosen to act. God is breaking into history in a redemptive way. *He basileia tou theou* – "the kingdom/reign of God" houses the idea of the kingdom and comes basically from the OT. The hope of the kingdom of God took many forms in Judaism. The two most widely accepted were: (1) the Apocalyptic which said "the day of the Lord" would be preceded by a terrible tribulation and an overthrow of the existing world order; (2) the Commonwealth of Israel which

[3] Greek words are transliterated into English and italicized.

said to keep the law perfectly and the kingdom will be born in your midst. Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom, however, is distinctive: He declares that the kingdom of God is God's reign at any time, anywhere. It not only is coming but is already present in Himself. It cannot be earned, for even the outcasts are invited. God has subjected Himself to human limitations in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. This means that He has chosen to bring in and announce the kingdom in and through redemptive *suffering*. This was totally foreign to the Jewish way of thinking.

B. Calling of Jesus (1:16-20)

The importance of the call to discipleship is that the concept of the gospel is not just details about the life of Jesus but a call of service which must be answered by surrender and commitment or rejection.
The concept of discipleship is very important for Mark. To proclaim the gospel and to call for decision calls people to conversion as they recognize the judgment of God on their sin.

C. Credentials of Jesus (1:21-6:56)

1. Healing on Sabbath (1:21-28)

1:21-28 emphasize the authority of Jesus. His authority is in Himself alone. Jesus dealt with the man in such a way as to free him from that which had bound him and had prevented him from attaining the works of God.

2. Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law and Others (1:29-34)

1:29-31 emphasize the suddenness and completeness of the healing. It also shows Christ's concern for those in need.

1:32-34 house a miracle as an act of God which benefits or helps man. His miracles are subservient to His main purpose: to reach out to lost humanity. He is the One in Whom humanity can find redemption. He would not accept the testimony from such a source as demons.

3. Tour of Galilee with Fisherman (1:35-39)

1:35-39 stress that Jesus is pursued because of His increasing popularity. He, therefore, withdraws to be alone in prayer. When interrupted, He states the necessity for preaching the gospel elsewhere.

4. Healing of Leper (1:40-45)

1:40-45 contain the cleansing of the leper. Leprosy was looked upon as

the most terrible of all diseases. It was regarded by the Jews as a punishment for sin or that it was caused by some evil spirit. The man was thus an outcast and was regarded as hopeless. Jesus' request to tell no one of this healing was to prevent such a large following which would hinder His public ministry of preaching and teaching. The man's failure to do so abruptly ended Jesus' ministry in the city.

5. Healing of Paralytic (2:1-12)

2:1-12 involve a controversy with the religious leaders which centers in His authority to forgive sin. Is. 43:25 was understood to mean that only God could forgive sin. The Jews did not even expect the Messiah to forgive sin. For Mark, the evidence of His power to forgive is seen in His power and authority over sickness and disease. It was verified by what He did.
Jesus refers to Himself as "the Son of Man" (Dan. 7:13), an OT term indicating vindication. To keep people from misinterpreting His Messiahship, Jesus avoided the term *Messiah* and instead used the term "Son of Man." It was His refusal to be the popular kind of Messiah that led to His crucifixion.

6. Levi's Honoring of Jesus (2:13-17)

2:13-17 note that Levi (Matthew) was an outcast. He was a Roman sympathizer and was, therefore, hated by the Jews. But the call to discipleship was extended to even him. Levi hosts a dinner in which fellow tax collectors and sinners were invited. This created controversy with the Pharisees because it emphasizes Jesus' role of calling sinners to discipleship.

7. Defense of Disciples (2:18-22)

2:18-22 contain another controversy with the religious leaders over fasting. This centers in Jesus' lack of concern for ritual requirement. It is a challenge to Judaism at its very heart. To reject "the tradition of the elders" was to reject the very foundation of Judaism. There is a contrast between dead orthodoxy and meeting the needs of people. Verses 21-22 emphasize that the new kingdom cannot be forced into a mold of nationalistic Judaism. Jesus' defense of His disciples was thus a radical break with institutional Judaism which was devastating to the Jews.

8. Lord of Sabbath Regarding Grain (2:23-28)

2:23-28 embrace a Sabbath controversy with the religious leaders. The heart of the story is in vs. 27-28. The most important thing is man's

relationship with God. The Sabbath had symbolized this (cp. Col. 2:16-17). Thus, an additional break with Judaism.

9. Lord of Sabbath Regarding Healing (3:1-6)

3:1-6 contain Mark's contrasting the compassion of Jesus with the callousness of the religious leaders. The center of attention is not the miracles but "*would he heal the man's hand on the Sabbath*?" I.e., would Jesus help the man or protect the Jewish institution? The import of the story is to free Christianity from Jewish legalism. Would Jesus be in the business of ministry or condemnation? The result of His decision was a decision to seek His death.

10. Healing of Multitude and Prophetic Servant (3:7-12)

3:7-12 note the growing popularity of Jesus which was thoroughly resented by the Jews. However, His recognition is as a miracle-worker and not as the Suffering Messiah.

11. Choosing of Twelve Apostles (3:13-19)

3:13-19 contain Jesus' summons and appointing of the twelve. Mark places it here because one of his emphases is the training of the twelve for the proclamation of the gospel. This is a deliberate parallel to the twelve tribes of Israel – they are the New Israel. Their selection is at the discretion of Jesus and not on their own merit.

12. Healing of Demon Possessed and Accusation of Blasphemy (3:20-30)

3:20-30 show the determination of those who were against Jesus and their unwillingness to acknowledge the testimony of the Spirit in the ministry of Jesus. Such persistent failure to so acknowledge, even in the overwhelming face of casting out demons, is a sin without forgiveness.

13. Jesus' Mother and Brothers (3:31-35)

3:31-35 stress that Jesus' relation with His disciples is more important than His family relationship. The disciples must, and often did, leave all that they had for the work of the kingdom of God.

14. Parables (4:1-34)

This indicates the period of training the disciples for the work of the kingdom. Parables are not just nice little moral lessons. They are fighting words. Here again, Jesus is confronting Judaism at its very heart.

4:1-20 is a parable which describes the various responses to the teachings of Jesus. It is a picture of the different kinds of hearers (light-hearted, faint-hearted, half-hearted, whole-hearted).

4:21-25 states the purpose of a parable. Just as a lamp is intended to give light, so too is a parable. It is intended to *reveal* truth, not *conceal* truth. To understand, however, one must be very diligent in regard to discipleship.

4:26-29 stress that the results of the seed we sow are in God's hands. There will be a harvest. So, have faith in God.

4:30-32 state that the kingdom of God has appeared in Jesus, even though He has a only small band of people who are loyal to Him. In time, growth will come. Do not worry about the smallness of the seed (i.e., the beginning of the Christian movement), for the result will come.

4:33-34 note that Jesus was a teacher. Parabolic teaching was one of His main teaching methods.

15. Calming of the Sea (4:35-41)

4:35-41 is a n*ature miracles or* those not necessarily involving healing. The result of what happens is that it causes the disciples to look more closely to Jesus. He wants to increase their faith in Him. This miracle demonstrated the power of His presence and that they could depend on Him. Jesus is in control and will meet their needs.

16. Healing of Demoniac (5:1-20)

5:1-20: The central thrust regarding the Gerasene demoniac is that Jesus calmed the man and freed him from demon possession. Attention is focused on His authority and power. He is reaching out to meet human need.

17. Healing of Jairus' Daughter (5:21-43)

5:21-43 combines two miracle stories into one. Mark is using the frame to explain the picture. These stories illustrate Jesus' compassion and the great faith of people from whom such faith was not expected (over against the attitude of those who should know better). The faith of the woman (evidenced in her touch of His clothing) was really inadequate but Jesus did not discourage it. He rather encouraged it and caused it to grow. God deals with inadequacies. Jairus' daughter (and the faith of Jairus – one of the synagogue officials) show that some of the Jews did respond to Jesus in faith.

18. Last Visit to Nazareth (6:1-6a)

6:1-6a contain the rejection of Jesus at Nazareth. Mark emphasizes that Jesus is really known only in/by faith. Even though He was in His hometown, He was not really known. To genuinely know Him, demands that He be followed in discipleship.

19. Tour of Galilee and Sending Forth of the Twelve (6:6b-13)

6:6b-13 involve the sending out of the twelve. Their primary purpose (v. 12) is to issue a call to repentance. They were sent out before Jesus to announce the kingdom of God in Jesus. When the kingdom comes, people must be ready. To "shake off the dust" denotes judgment. It is a testimony against those who stand outside the kingdom. Discipleship is important to Mark for it is only in committed disciples that the gospel survives the crucifixion and the rigors of the first century.

20. Herod (6:14-29)

6:14-29 note the increasing popularity of Jesus. The reputation of Jesus now comes to the attention of government officials. The death of John the Baptist had occurred some time earlier but is inserted here because of the popularity and the peril of Jesus. The passage reveals the attitude of Herod (Herod Antipas, ruler of Galilee and Perea) toward John (the forerunner) and Jesus. It illustrates dramatically the cost of discipleship.

21. Feeding of 5,000 (6:30-44)

6:30-44 contain the miraculous feeding of 5,000. Mark sees Jesus as having the ability to sustain His disciples whatever their need. It is an act of compassion. The magnitude of the miracle is seen in the fragments left over.

22. Jesus' Refusal to be Political King (6:45-46)

6:45-46 briefly note Jesus' withdrawal from the people to pray. John 6: 14-15 explain the reason for the withdrawal: His refusal to be the political King they would have tried to force Him to be.

23. Walking on Water (6:47-52)

6:47-52 paint another miraculous event: walking on the water. In spite of turmoil and turbulent times, Christ's disciples are to keep their eyes of faith on Jesus. In other words, have faith in Him no matter what happens. Even being in God's will does not exempt one from difficulties. But it is through difficulties that the disciple's faith is strengthened & developed.

24. Gennesaret (6:53-56)

6:53-56 contain a summary which reveals something of His fame. With His power well-known, it is easy to see why the Jews did not pursue Him.

III Profiles on Jesus (7:1-12:44)

A. Conflicts with Jesus (7:1-8:26)

1. Pharisees' Reproachment of Jesus (7:1-23)

7:1-23 contain a controversy over the commandment of God and the traditions of men. In v. 6, Jesus quotes Is. 29:13 which indicates the hardness of their hearts. This is a diagnosis that the real problem is internal. They are doing just what is expected of men who have no real internal commitment to God. The result is that they, in the name of God, were doing the very opposite of what God intended in the law. Vs. 10-13 cite the law and shows how they abused it. V. 14-16 answers the accusation of eating with unclean hands. Jesus abrogates a host of food regulations. Vs. 17-23 involve Jesus' explanation of the parable in private: what comes out of the mouth explains the situation of the heart and lack of internal, inward commitment.

2. Withdrawal to Tyre & Sidon and Healing (7:24-30)

7:24-30 relay the faith of a Syro-Phoenician woman. Mark points out the faith of one from whom such faith was not expected. Her faith was far different from the religious experts who were legalistic in their exegetical exactitude, but saw no necessity for simple faith. Her faith was rewarded.

3. Withdrawal to Decapolis and Healing (7:31-37)

7:31-37 emphasize Jesus' concern and compassion for an outcast, even the healing of a deaf and dumb man. It is clear, then, that Jesus calls all people to the kingdom. He arouses and develops the man's faith.

4. Feeding of 4,000 (8:1-9)

8:1-9 contain another miraculous feeding with just seven loaves and a few small fish. Approximately four thousand people ate until they were full. There were seven large baskets of food left over.

5. Magadan/Dalmanutha and Attack of Pharisees (8:10-12)

8:10-12 note that Jesus acted out of love for the people and refused to act for the Pharisees who asked for a sign. He did not want to run out and

claim to be the Messiah because it would mean riot and death for many people. Again, He refused the popular idea of what the Messiah was to be like.

6. Confrontation of Disciples and Healing of Blind Man (8:13-26)

8:13-21 stress the corruption of the kingdom by making it a physical and political kingdom (cp. "the yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod"). In vs. 16-21, Mark is making a transition from the early period of Jesus' ministry to a retreat or private time of teaching His disciples. The dullness of the disciples stands out clearly. For Mark, the important thing is Jesus' efforts to turn His disciples away from the popular concept of Messiah.

8:22-26 point out that the healing of the blind man was gradual. *This appears only in Mark.* This healing represents the slowness of the disciples in coming to a proper understanding of who and what Jesus is. "outside the village" in v. 23 indicates that Jesus was not trying to gain a following, but was acting out of compassion to meet human need. There can be no insight into who Jesus is without commitment to Him. The first requirement of discipleship is commitment.

B. Instructions from Jesus (8:27-10:52)

1. Confession of Christ at Caesarea (8:27-30)

8:27-30 mark *the first climax* or the beginning of the second half of Mark's gospel account. Indeed, the pivotal point of the gospel according to Mark is this recognition of Jesus as the Messiah. His charge that they "tell no man about Him" indicates that they were laboring under a false concept of Messiah and that they had much to learn about what that Messiahship involved. As a matter of fact, Jesus avoided using the term "Messiah" precisely because of its popular political implications. He rather used the term "Son of Man" to describe His redemptive mission.

2. Prediction of His Death and Resurrection (8:31-33)

8:31-9:1 is where Jesus began to teach the disciples about the true nature of Messiah: i.e., it will be necessary for Him to suffer and die. They did not expect this. Peter rebuked Jesus because he too had a false concept of Messiah and of the kingdom of God. Jesus rebuked Peter because He knew that suffering was necessary and that He would not be deterred from taking this path.

3. Call to Discipleship (8:34-9:1)

8:34-9:1 here He issues a call to discipleship. He declares that His followers must also spend themselves in the service of the Gospel. They too will face suffering. This call to discipleship is the heart and core of Mark's gospel narrative.

4. Transfiguration and Puzzlement over Resurrection (9:2-13)

9:2-13 is where Mark sees in this account of the transfiguration a link between what God is doing in Jesus and what He has done in the past with the two great prophets, Elijah and Moses. Both of these prophets suffered misunderstanding, opposition, and persecution as did Jesus. In other words, what God has sought to do in the past is done in Jesus. All the power and presence of God that operated in these two men of God in the past is now operative in Jesus alone. Therefore, they can look up and see "Jesus only." If they fail to follow Him, there is no one else to follow.

5. Healing of Demoniac (9:14-29)

9:14-29 emphasizes not only Jesus' compassion on those in need but also points to his faith and to the fact that He did this by the authority of God. He is thereby seeking to increase the faith of His disciples. It is a necessary part of His call to discipleship, a repeated emphasis throughout the gospel according to Mark.

6. Prediction of His Death and Resurrection (9:30-32)

9:30-32 notes that Jesus travels throughout Galilee incognito to spend more time with the disciples. The necessity for this states in v. 32. He who represents God to man and man to God is to be killed by those He came to save. The disciples had great difficulty in accepting this truth.

7. Childlikeness (9:33-37)

9:33-37 stresses the attitude of dependency, like children. This takes place in a dispute about greatness. Greatness in the kingdom of God is measured by unselfish and unambitious service for others. That is, do the best you can with the opportunities you have. In the kingdom of God, a job well done is the opportunity for more jobs.

8. Discipleship (9:38-50)

9:38-50 indicate that Christian disciples are not to become a closed shop. Real evidence for membership in the kingdom of God is ministry "in the name of Jesus," i.e., what God does through committed disciples. Vs. 41-50 contain a collection of miscellaneous sayings about discipleship. The

basic reward of the servant is the opportunity to serve in the kingdom.

9. Divorce (10:1-12)

10:1-12 stress the importance of the marriage relationship. This question of the Pharisees is designed to draw Jesus into controversy. He simply points to the original purpose of God in creation (Gen. 2:24). Jesus emphasized the permanency of marriage as a commitment to God. Marriage is not just a civil contract. It is an opportunity for Christian service and ministry.

10. Childlikeness (10:13-16)

10:13-16 again stresses that the kingdom of God must be received as a little child: not innocency, but dependency (upon God); not childishness, but childlikeness.

11. Rich Young Ruler (10:17-31)

10:17-31 contain a question (v. 17) which was one of great concern for Jewish rabbis. Jesus' answer points to God. The "rich young ruler" (Mt. 19:20, 22; Lk. 18:18) answered the question from the standpoint of law (v. 19-21). Jesus, however, emphasized commitment to God and a denial of self. His refusal to get rid of his god (wealth) evidenced his lack of commitment to God (a basic requirement of discipleship). Unless a person will give everything he *has* and *is* to the cause of God, he is not a disciple.

12. Prediction of Death and Resurrection (10:32-34)

10:32-34 indicate that the disciples are fearfully amazed that Jesus is walking on to His death. He, again, reminds them of the necessity of suffering and death. The term "Son of Man" indicates vindication (i.e., through the resurrection [v. 34b]).

13. A Ridiculed Request (10:35-45)

10:34-35 emphasize *humility* in the context of the question raised by James and John. The way to honor and victory is through suffering. Jesus is seeking to turn them from the concept of a physical kingdom centered in Jerusalem to the concept of a spiritual kingdom established through the proclamation of the Gospel.

14. Healing of Blind Man (10:46-52)

10:46-52 uses the healing of Bartimaeus to illustrate the ministry of

the Son of Man and a recognition of His Messiahship (cp. "Son of David").
This is the first time that Jesus accepts such an identification without rebuke. It serves to show that Jesus will enter Jerusalem as Messiah.

C. Entry of Jesus (11:1-12:44)

1. Cooperation with Jesus (11:1-11)

11:1-11 begin Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem. In both the method and manner He enters Jerusalem, He intends to reveal the futility of a Messianic hope that did not rise above the concept of a physical kingdom set up in Jerusalem. The Messiah comes, not in military and political victory, but in selfless service: to give Himself. He came to oppose Judaism at its very heart and to put the kingdom of God into a spiritual rather than a physiccal perspective.

2. Cursing of Fig Tree by Jesus (11:12-14; 20-26)

11:12-14; 20-26 contain a devastating lesson to Judaism, as the cursing of the fruitless fig tree depicts Jesus' challenge to fruitless Judaism and the current concepts of Messiah. Judaism was going to suffer the judgment of God; judgment is coming on fruitless Judaism.

3. Cleansing of Temple by Jesus (11:15-19)

11:15-19 stress the same lesson as the fruitless fig tree: another challenge to Judaism. The money changing was taking place in the Court of the Gentiles. They had made it impossible for a Gentile to worship God. The *temple cultus* was a money-making business in this court and could not survive without the ill-gained money. Jesus' attack was by the authority of God.

4. Challenging of Jesus (11:27-33)

11:27-33 refer to the challenge of Jesus by the religious leaders as to the authority by which He cleansed the Temple. Jesus confounds the leaders with a question which they chose not to answer. Jesus follows suit.

5. Comparisons by Jesus (12:1-12)

12:1-12 use the parable of the vineyard and its tenants to point out that God is coming to His vineyard to judge the Jews. Jesus says that judgment is coming because of the way they had received Him. Thus, another judgment on fruitless Israel.

6. Caesar and Jesus (12:13-17)

12:13-17 contain another attempt by the religious leaders to get Jesus to say something for which He could be accused of insurrection against the Romans. He replies by saying, "Be a responsible citizen in this world and in relation to God."

7. Confutation of Sadducees & Pharisees/Scribes by Jesus (12:18-37)

12:18-27 contain the questioning of the Sadducees about the resurrection. They did not believe in resurrection and were simply trying to trap Him. Jesus' concept of the nature of resurrection is a resurrection-life in which Everything will center on communion with God.

12:28-34 represent another questioning episode about the greatest or most important commandment. Jesus emphasizes that the great command-ment requires single-minded devotion to God which issues into service for our fellowman. Love must be directed not only to God but also to others. Another 'trap' fails!

12:35-37 note that the scribes recognized that the Messiah would be the Son of David, but Jesus points out that Messiah is more than a man. The Messiah is both human and divine.

8. Condemnation of Scribes and Pharisees by Jesus (12:38-40)

12:38-40 give a strong condemnation of the religious leaders for their callous and pompous attitude. Jesus, again, reveals their inability to properly interpret scripture.

9. Compassion and Comments of Jesus (12:41-44)

12:41-44 provide additional insight into the nature of discipleship: the widow's contribution represented total commitment to God. This is essential for discipleship.

IV Pronouncements by Jesus (13:1-37)

A. Perilous Times Foretold by Jesus (13:1-27)
B. Parable of Fig Tree by Jesus (13:28-31)
C. Parousia of Jesus (13:32-37)

There are two major ways to interpret this chapter. Both will now be set forth:

1. THE BASIC CONCERN OF CHAPTER 13 IS THAT THE DISCIPLES NOT BE DETERRED FROM THE TASK OF WITNESS. In this chapter, Jesus guarantees the

success of the gospel and charges His disciples to be faithful in the proclamation of the gospel. They should not get hung up in Jerusalem
looking for the establishment of a physical, political kingdom (which was the current expectation of the Jews).

13:1-4 The question of the disciples and Jesus' prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem which took place at the end of the Jewish-Roman War (A.D. 66-70).

13:5-6 Jesus warns the disciples against those who would lead them into Messianic movements.

13:7-8 These verses indicate that the disciples will preach the gospel during tumultuous times. One need only read Josephus' *War of the Jews*, books 2-4, to see that this was true throughout the first century.

13:9-13 Jesus describes many personal afflictions which the disciples would suffer as they went out preaching the gospel. It is most necessary that the disciples remain faithful, for with God's power the gospel would survive with them.

13:14-23 This is a warning to the disciples against becoming involved in messianic speculations which flooded Jerusalem before and during the times of the Jewish revolts. In v. 19-20a, there is a warning against the intensity of the tribulations. The proclamation of the gospel will never be this crucial again because it depends on the faithfulness of the disciples. Vs. 20b indicates that the "elect" would survive long enough to proclaim the gospel. Vs. 21-23 is a warning against those who would use these tumultuous times for Messianic claims.

13:24-27 This apocalyptic language is used to denote an earth-shaking time: the course of history is changing (cp. Acts 2:19-20/Joel 2:31). It is in this crucial time that the church is to proclaim the gospel by which God gathers His elect.

13:28-31 The parable of the fig tree illustrates the need for the disciples to be aware of the developing situation (of the approaching war and the need to get out of Jerusalem) and get on with the preaching of the gospel.

13:32-37 The most important message about the end of the age is that the disciples should be ready and watch. How can they be ready? By doing every day what they know their Master wants them to do (v. 34).

2. THE BASIC CONCERN OF CHAPTER 13 IS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE AND JERUSALEM AND THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS

13:1-4 Jesus' remarks about the destruction of the Temple precipitate two questions by the disciples: (1) When will the destruction take place? (v. 5-23)?; (2) What will be the sign of the consummation of the age and the parousia [cp. Mt. 24:3] (v. 24-37)?

13:5-8 Jesus warns His disciples against false messianic claims. He also informs them that wars and rumors of wars are necessary (not that God designs them but that man

brings them on himself). These troublesome times, however, do not indicate the end. As a matter of fact, even more tumultuous times can be expected ("these are the beginning of woes").

13:9-13 Jesus informs the disciples of the personal afflictions which will come upon them as they proclaim the gospel. They would be betrayed by friends and family. They will even be taken to court. Jesus, however, urges them to remain faithful to His name. God will preserve His people as they serve Him.

13:14-23 Reference is to the destruction of the temple and the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70). Jesus warns them to get out of the city and avoid being trapped in such a destruction (cp. Josephus' *Wars of the Jews*, book IV, ch. III, paragraph 2). Jesus warns of those who would come with false messianic claims at such at time.

13:24-27 These verses may be regarded as a literal understanding of what is described. After this cosmic upheaval, the Son of Man will return to the earth "in/with great power and glory." He will come in judgment, and will also send forth His angels to gather together His people from all over the earth.

13:28-31This parable of the fig tree illustrates that the second coming of Jesus may be expected at any time. "These things" probably refers to 13:5-23.

13:32-27 The time of the end and of the second coming is God's secret. The disciples are to be alert and watchful.

V Passions of Jesus (14:1-15:47)

A. Plot to Kill Jesus (14:1-2)

14:1-2 These verses serve as an introduction to the Passion narrative.

B. Precious Ointment for Jesus (14:3-9)

14:3-9 Emphasis is on loyalty to Jesus. This is indispensable to discipleship. Vs. 8-9 refer to His coming crucifixion.

C. Price Agreement Concerning Betrayal of Jesus (14:10-11)

14:10-11 The betrayal of Jesus. Judas may have been one of those disillusioned messianic speculators. He wanted to force Jesus to act as a political kind of Messiah and overthrow the Romans. Things did not turn out as he expected.

D. Passover and Lord's Supper with Jesus (14:12-26)

14:12-26 The institution of the Lord's Supper within the context of the Passover serves to establish the ratification of the new covenant by the death & resurrection of Jesus.

E. Prediction of Peter's Denial by Jesus (14:27-31)

14:27-31 Peter did not really believe what he said because in the arrest, trial, and crucifixion, he concluded it was all over.

F. Praying of Jesus (14:32-42)

14:32-42 In Gethsemane, Jesus was in deep sorrow. The disciples are not much help and do not see the importance of the hour.

G. Partners against Jesus (14:43-72)

1. Betrayal and Arrest (14:43-52)

14:43-52 They expected some resistance (the number of people and the weapons suggest this) as other messianic pretenders had done. Judas was not a victim of circumstances beyond his control but was actively involved in what he did.

2. The Council (14:53-72)

14:53-72 The trial of Jesus and the denial of Peter are woven together by Mark. The reason for the denial within the night trial of Jesus is because it focuses attention on the Son of Man saying in v. 62. At the time when He is at the mercy of the enemies, He reveals for all to see His faith in the vindication of God (the term "Son of Man" comes from the OT and is associated with vindication). His "being alone" evidences that what God does through Him, He does through Him alone with no one else to help Him bear the burden. He is accused of blasphemy by the Jews.

H. Pilate and Jesus (15:1-15)

15:1-15 Mark emphasizes the reluctance of Pilate to believe the charges against Jesus. Pilate eventually yields because he is afraid of revolt among the people. Pilate's motive is purely political: to keep down revolt among the Jews. Before the Jews, Jesus is accused of blasphemy. Before the Romans, He is accused of political insurrection. His being bound (v. 1) at the trial was positive proof for the Jews that He could not be the Messiah. The ones who welcomed Him at His entry into Jerusalem were the very ones who now cry out for His death.

I. Place of a Skull and Crucifixion of Jesus (15:22-41)

15:22-41 In v. 38, the veil being torn in two was a symbolic meaning of His death: access to God without the temple cultus. In v. 39, the import of the testimony of the Roman soldier is that a Gentile recognized what the Jews had failed to recognize. Jesus became known to this Gentile in the way He died: in faith and commitment to God.

J. Pallbearer and Burial of Jesus (15:42-47)

15:42-47 The pallbearer and person in charge of the burial was Joseph from Arimathea. Since Jesus died only six hours after His crucifixion began, a note which surprised Pilate since it sometimes took days for people to die, he gave Joseph permission to deal with His burial.

VI Power of Jesus (16:1-20)

A. Resurrection of Jesus (16:1-13)

16:1-13 The resurrection emphasizes the vindication of the Son of Man. The greatest evidence for the resurrection is the existence of the Christian church.

B. Commission from Jesus (16:14-18)

16:14-18 After rebuking them for their unbelief in the testimony of others concerning His resurrection, He commissions them to tell others.

C. Ascension of Jesus (16:19)

16:19 The ascension of Jesus to heaven was witnessed by the very ones who were commissioned to tell others.

D. Obedience to Jesus (16:20)

16:20 The purpose of discipleship then and for all times is obedience to His commands. Failure to do so represents actual and practical denial of discipleship.

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